Racial and Ethnic Diversity: Highlights from the 2020 Census

Discussant Presentation

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The 2020 Race and Ethnicity Questions

- **Summary:** Changes from the 2010 Census race and ethnicity questions result in a "more accurate portrait of how people self-identify."

- **Alternate Summary:** Changes in question wording and response codes in 2020 result in a change in our description of the ethnic and racial composition of the United States.

- **Questions:**

1. Change in measurement accuracy or change in survey context, post-survey adjustments, coding rules?

2. Does "more accurate" = "accurate?"

3. Does self-administered = self-identified?

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The 2020 Race and Ethnicity Questions

1. **Question:** Change in measurement accuracy or change in wording and coding rules?

- Ethnicity and race questions are not the only changes.

- **Code list improvements:** more detailed white and black groups is a clear improvement in data quality and useable data from the 2020 Census.

- **Follow-up:** When and how will the Census Bureau decide on which data products to publish for these newly detailed white and black groups? Can NAC have input into this process?

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The 2020 Race and Ethnicity Questions

1. **Question:** Change in measurement accuracy or change in wording and coding rules?

- **Autocoding and Residual Coding:** when write-ins match the master file, responses are automatically coded. That happened in 99% of cases, which is promising.

- **Follow-up:** More on the lower number of Hispanic origin write-ins between 2010 and 2020? Can the coding rule alone explain it or is some of it attributable to the revised example groups or something else?

- **Follow-up:** How is the remaining 1% that was processed using the residual coding system distributed between ethnicity question and race question? And within the race question, where is the 1% in the different race categories?

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The 2020 Race and Ethnicity Questions

- **Question:** Does "more accurate" = "accurate?"

- **Follow-up:** What % of "two or more" races are Hispanic identifiers?

  - Slide 27 shows about 39% of Hispanics identify only as Some Other Race and 38% identify with two or more races. (What is the total % of Hispanic identifiers who do not find themselves in the race question?)

  - What does "invalid" mean?

- **Follow-up:** What % of "two or more" races also identified as White/MENA?

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The 2020 Race and Ethnicity Questions

- **Question:** Does "more accurate" = "accurate?"

- **Follow-up:** "We are confident changes in diversity measures reflect actual demographic changes." Does that confidence also apply to the increase in the multiracial population count from 9 million (2010) to 33.8 million (2020?

  - Changes from 2010 reflect *both* actual demographic change and changes resulting from changes in question wording (more write-in response areas, more and different examples of ethnicity and race categories).

- **Follow-up:** Could that also affect our confidence in other counts?

  - Is the decline in the white population a lower bound estimate? (Counterfactual: what would that decline have looked like if there were a separate MENA category as initially planned?

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The 2020 Race and Ethnicity Questions

- **Question:** Does self-administered = "self-identified?"

- **Follow-up:** If changes from 2010 reflect *both* actual demographic change and changes in survey context, it begs the question of *who* is answering the ethnicity and race questions and how that might differ by response mode.

  - Are there differences between online, mail, phone, in person on "other race" and two or more races?

  - Are there paradata for phone interviews or in person interviews on who in the household participated?

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The 2020 Race and Ethnicity Questions

- **Summary:** Changes from the 2010 Census race and ethnicity questions result in a "more accurate portrait of how people self-identify."

- **Alternate Summary:** Changes from 2010 reflect *both* actual demographic change in the ethnic and racial composition and changes resulting from changes in question wording and response codes.

- **Follow-up:** Critical to keep in mind both sources of change between 2010 and 2020 and, going forward, to research what potential new standards for 2030 (e.g., returning to the proposal to combine ethnicity and race questions, adding MENA category) might yield vis-a-vis both sources of future change.

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